

# Ebony Evangelism Project

## Report 2

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## Introduction

On December 1, 1992, pastors, evangelists, and Bible instructors attended the annual Regional Evangelism Council at Oakwood College. They participated in a Vision for Mission session with the purpose of exploring the strategic plan for evangelism developed by the Ebony Evangelism Taskforce of the NAD Think Tank on Evangelism. It was conducted by Elder W. C. Scales, Jr., NAD Ministerial Director, and Elder Harold Lee, Executive Secretary, Columbia Union.

The results of the process are summarized in this report from the work sheets turned in by 106 of the participants. The responses to each question explored during the session are displayed in rank order from the response that was most often given by participants to the responses mentioned by only one or two participants. The percentage of participants who wrote down a response included in a particular cluster is shown in parenthesis at the end of the cluster.

**What pleases you about the proposal for African-American Evangelism and Church Growth?**

1. The basic concept -- the fact that planning happened; the wholistic approach; the goal seems reachable; the emphasis on the need for evangelism in North America; the comprehensive, extensive scope of the plan; the future-oriented planning; the strong spiritual emphasis; the fact that the plan seems workable; the proposal to coordinate growth; it addresses existing problems; its relationship to global mission; the attention to Friendship Evangelism as well as growth; the honest input; the fact that it defines strengths and weaknesses; the focus of the plan; the potential; it was objective, practical; it recognizes quality growth; the fair and equitable manner of application; it provides room for new ideas; it is a quantum leap. (69%)

2. The level of unity that it proposes -- the fact that there is a program like this; everything about the plan; the sharing of teams between conferences; the involvement of the laity. (55%)

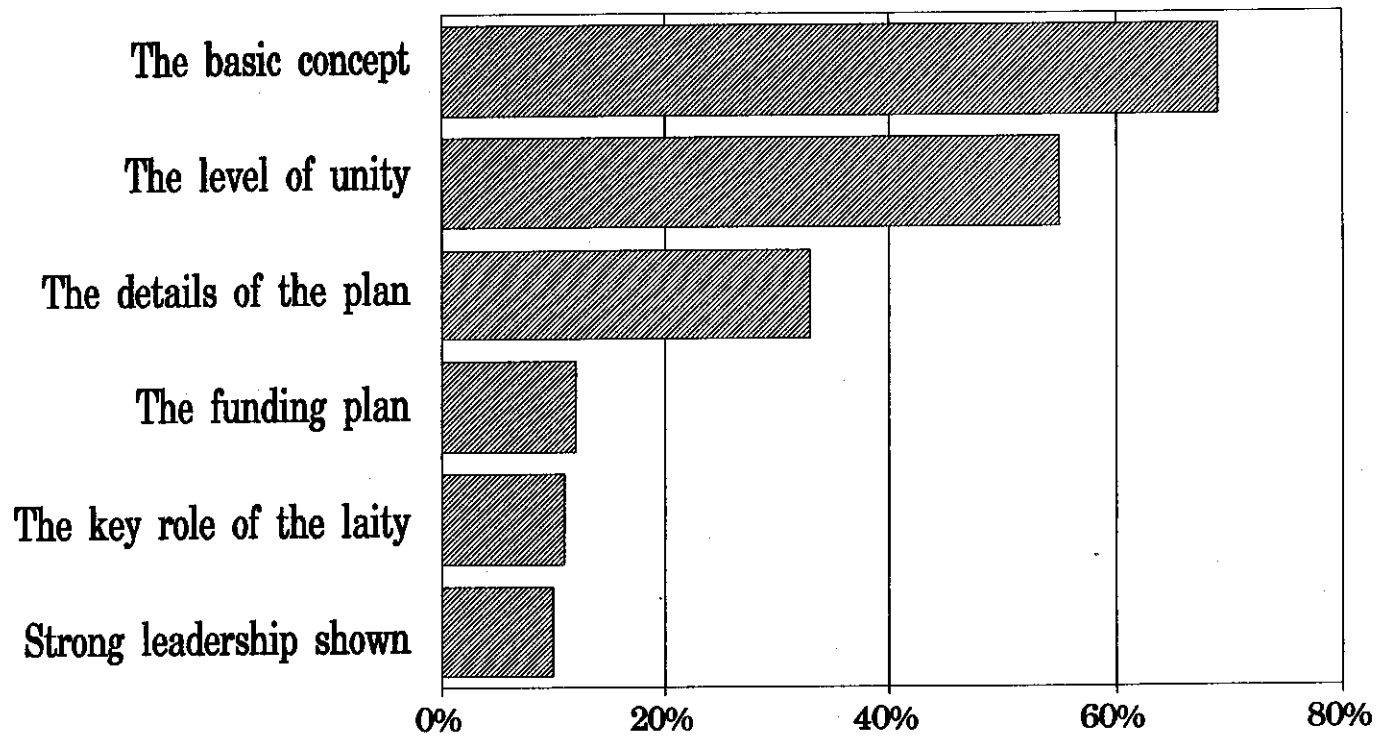
3. The means for implementation -- the priority being given in this plan to finishing the work; the high level of participation; the degree of communication involved; the need for regular reports; the role of prayer; the fact that there is a proposal; the use of Bible instructors in the plan. (33%)

4. The plan for funding this proposal -- the availability of funds for evangelism; the available money; the prospect of additional funds and more involvement. (12%)

5. To key role of the laity -- in calling on former members; in building acceptance in the whole church; in community involvement. (11%)

6. The strong leadership demonstrated in the plan -- the proactive NAD leaders that helped develop the plan, the commitment to the plan from top leadership, the acceptance of women becoming a part of evangelism, the willingness for change, and the cooperation. (10%)

# What pleases you?



## What troubles you about the proposal?

1. Will it actually be implemented? -- big plans have a past history of never being implemented; the effects of independent ministries have not been considered; there is a lack of awareness of off-shoot groups and their impact; the plan is not a balanced approach that meets social, health, and practical living needs; it ignores causes of meager growth; it is hard to believe that there will be no snags; more communication is needed; there is a possible lack of a continuous flow of information; there are some unresolved conflicts; what about implementation on the conference and local church level; how can we handle the growth of the church financially; this is a trickle down or "top-down" plan; don't become just planners and not doers; does the church have the ability to change by 2000; it needs more clarification in terms of outreach to Moslems; we might get hung up on phase I and not move on. (44%)

2. The plan needs more input from the laity; it is not grass-roots oriented enough to get members to "own" the proposal; it does not address the decline in the commitment of members to witnessing; it does not address the lack of spiritual commitment and maintaining the standards; it is based on taking credit for one's self; it does not address our inability to involve youth; it does not address how to motivate church family; it would be hard for small churches; it does not speak to multi-church districts; it is not strong in medical work; it does not include methods of attracting former members; it excludes family ministry; it excludes educational institutions; there is a need of a support group program in case of failure; it does address the motivation of members; it does put a greater emphasis on faith; it ignores time for members in task; it has an emphasis on getting people and not on keeping them; it does not talk enough about prayer and self sacrifice. (37%)

3. There are leadership problems involved with this plan or not adequately addressed by it -- what about generational leadership; it might force the black worker to lose his identity in The Work; it does not address the lack of Regional Conference CM directors; black members on West Coast are secondary in consideration; Bible workers are not mentioned; there is not enough involvement of administrative leadership; present leaders may be unable to carry this out; concern about the ability of leaders to effectively work the plan; concern about the motivation of leaders; the role of the union conferences is not visible; more pastors need to be involved in the planning process. (15%)

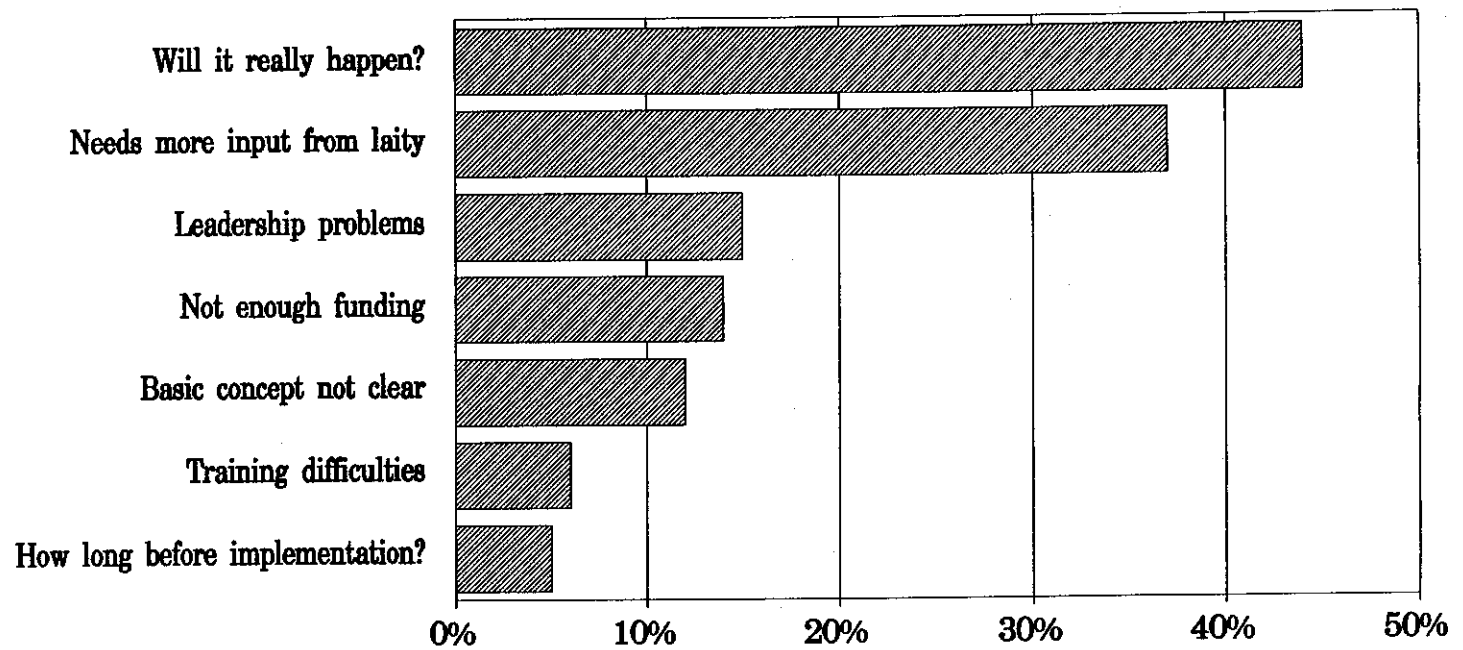
4. There is not enough funding to do this plan properly; plans have to go through too many committees before funds reach local churches; it does not address the need to reprioritize funding to mission; there is a lack of money for evangelism. (14%)

5. The basic concept is not clear; there is too much nonessential data; the problems are not clearly defined; it is too complex; this is just another NAD proposal. (12%)

6. It assumes that pastors can train lay people, which has not been proven; it does not really address how to retrain the members. (6%)

7. It is too far off; how long will it take? (5%)

# What troubles you?

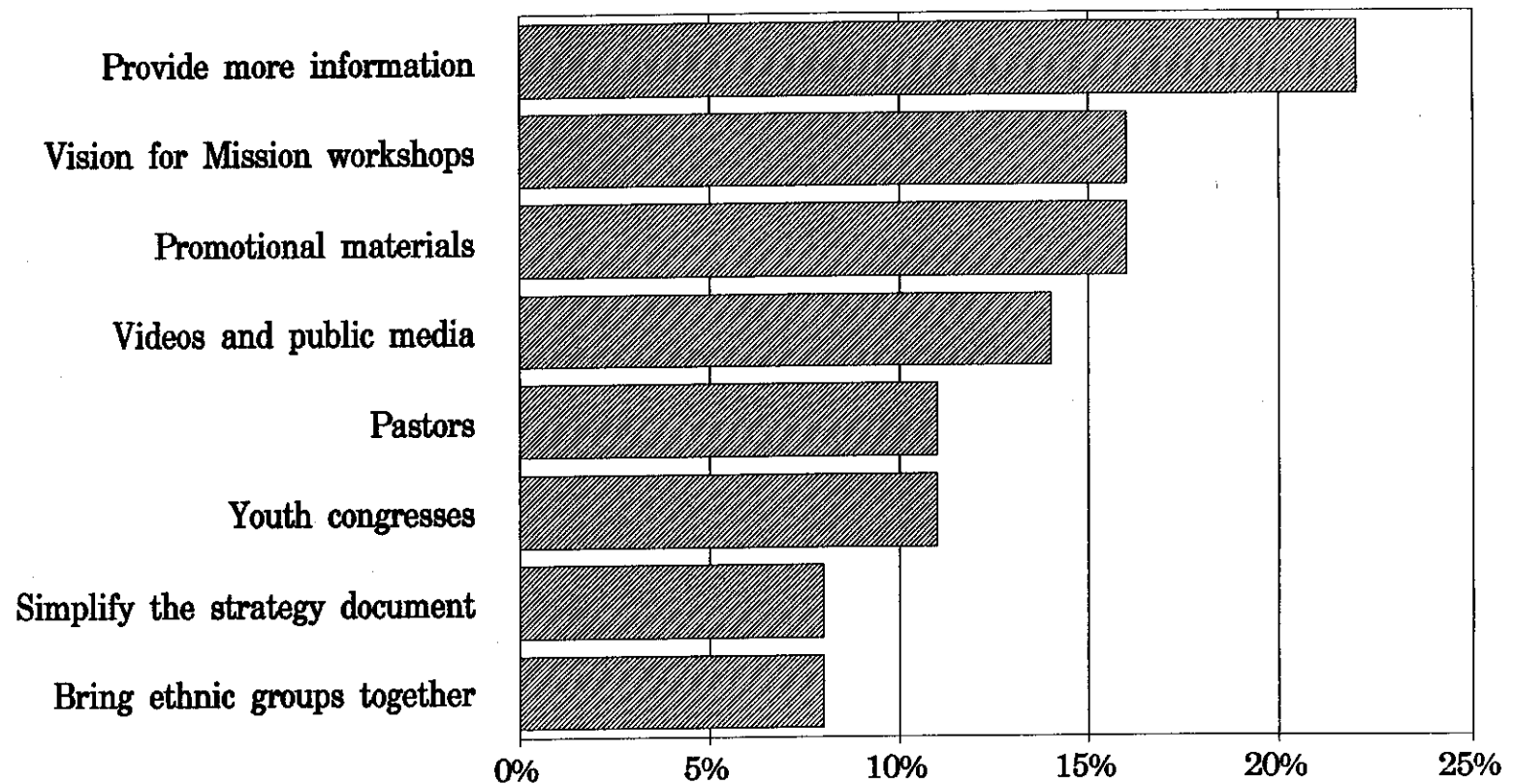


How can we share the vision of African-American evangelism and church growth?

1. By providing more information; through an information system that provides regular, effective communication. (22%)
2. Vision for Mission workshops conducted by the unions and the division. (16%)
3. Through promotional and departmental materials such as the Sabbath School lessons and helps, bulletin board posters, and articles in Adventist periodicals. (16%)
4. Through videos and the public media; TV, radio and the newspapers. (14%)
5. Training of pastors concerning their part in the strategy and monthly meetings where each pastor can share what is happening, needs, etc. (11%)
6. Presentations at all youth federations and congresses, camp meetings, area meetings, convocations, etc. (11%)
7. Simplify the document describing the strategy; use easy to understand proposals and reports. (8%)
8. Don't label the plan "African-American;" bring the ethnic groups together. (8%)



# How can we share the vision?



How can we create or intensify pastor and lay awareness of the project?

1. Communicate regularly through constant reminders from the pulpit; weekly reports; sermons about mission of the church, as often as once a month; "Spotlight" presentations during Sabbath worship and at special meetings; the Personal Ministries time; a weekly bulletin insert; and guest speakers visiting the churches. (20%)

2. Undertake a prayer emphasis for each segment of the strategy with prayer bands and special days of fasting and prayer. (15%)

3. Provide training, including a clear, "hands-on" understanding of the project; teach members about denominational structure; organize a program by which Church Ministries and Ministerial departmental workers meet with interested churches; conduct lay congresses, seminars and workshops on soul-winning methods and how to manage change in the church. (15%)

4. Give tokens of affirmation; incentives for the work being done by churches, laity, and pastors; applaud their accomplishments. (5%)

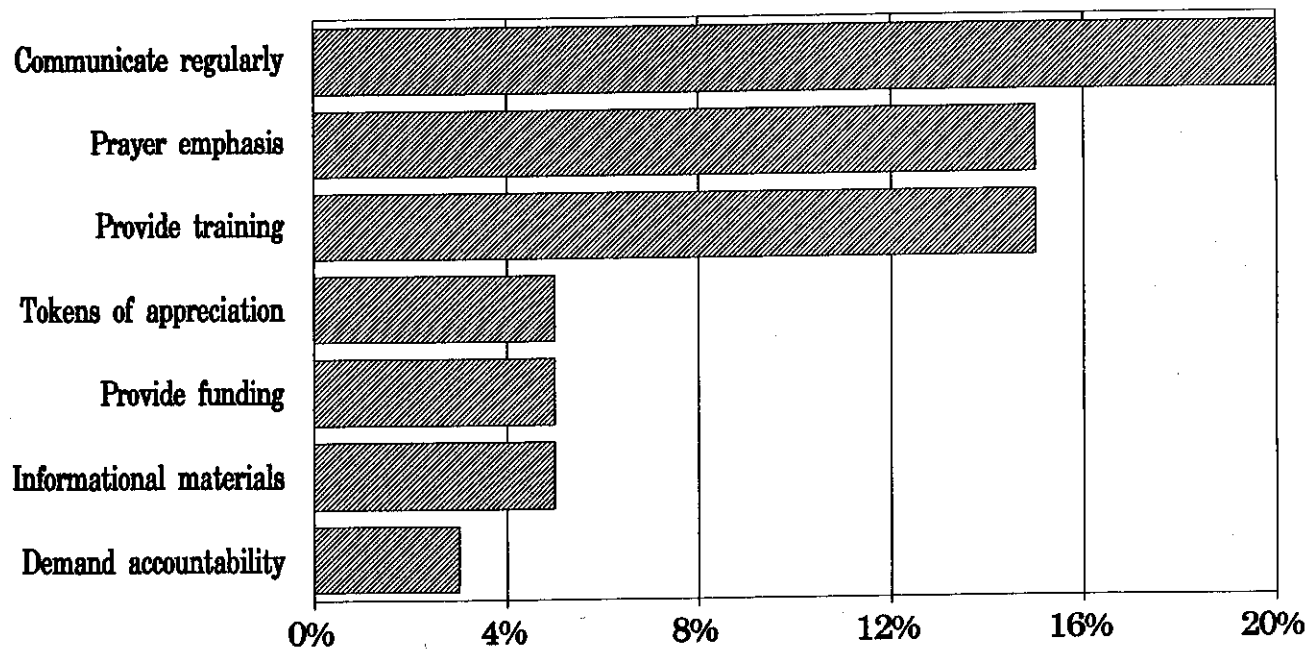
5. Provide funding for the project; send more money to local churches. (5%)

6. Place informational materials in the hands of pastors and members that will demonstrate the effectiveness of the strategy, and provide answers to objections. (5%)

7. Demand accountability of the pastors. (3%)

Other items mentioned by only one person: Set goals for motivation; help pastors and members to become spokespersons for the project; publish the results of today's work; encourage administrators to provide visible leadership; change the liturgy in our churches.

## To create or intensify awareness



**What kinds of resistance ought we to expect?**

1. Limited funds; holding back funds from the project; disbelief that financial help will be available; not enough budget; most denominational money will be used for other purposes. (18%)

2. Traditional SDAs who are against change and progress; the feeling that we are doing this because everybody is doing it (the Celebration movement); wanting things to continue in the same old patterns. (18%)

3. Attitudes such as "it is just another program" like Harvest 90, etc.; "we've tried it before"; "this too shall pass away" (13%)

4. A perception that the project is too centralized, involves too much red tape and too many documents. (10%)

5. Lethargy in the church; non-committed members; indifference at local levels about project objectives. (10%)

6. Lack of knowledge and tools. (8%)

7. Lack of time on the part of church members. (6%)

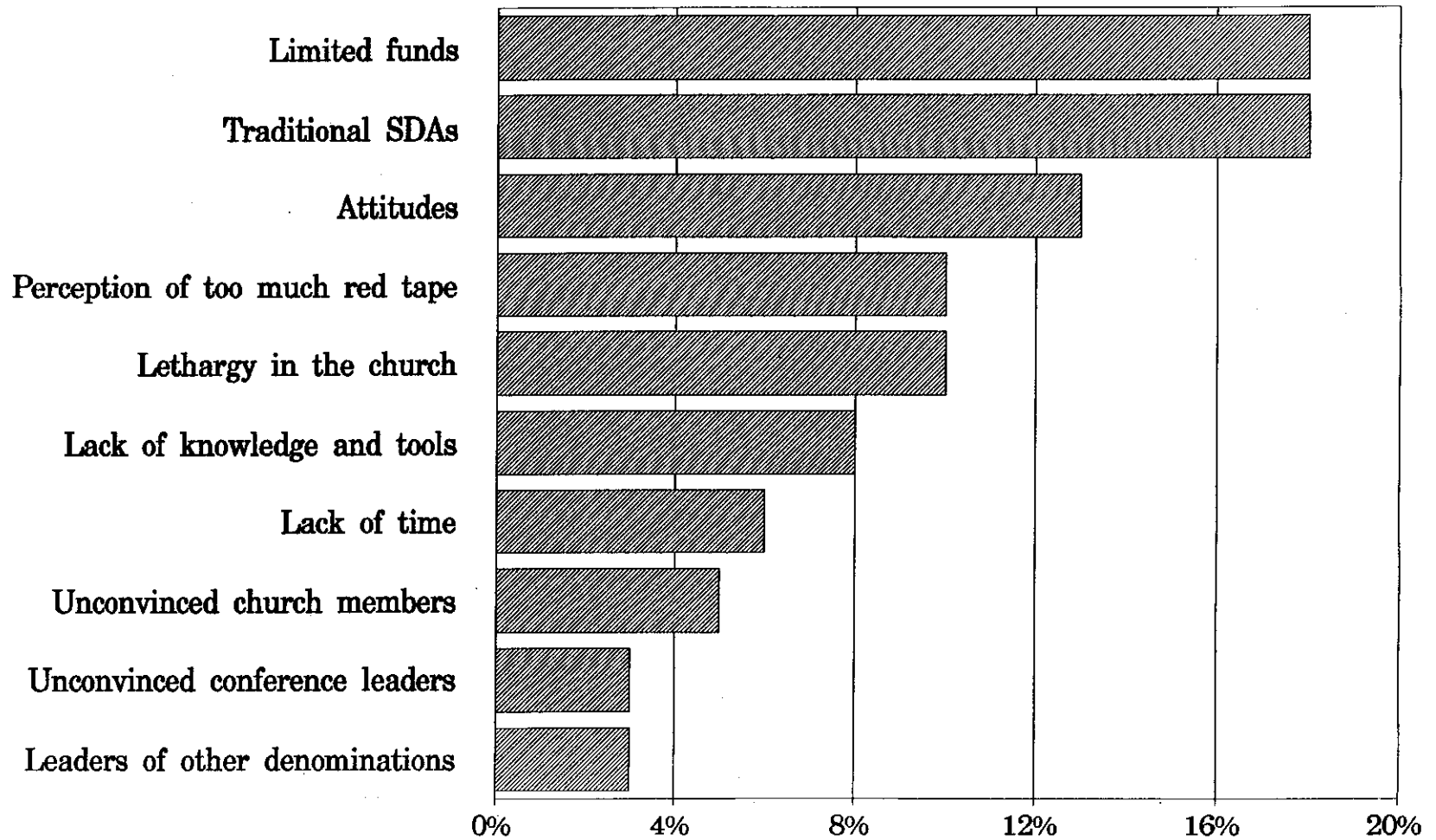
8. Unconvinced church members; a lack of faith in this project; a lack of enthusiasm about the potential for success; a lack of trust in church leadership. (5%)

9. Unconvinced conference leaders. (3%)

10. Leaders of other denominations. (3%)

Items mentioned by only by one person: Many members do not understand the history and teachings of this church; a lack of Christ-centered focus in local churches; the delay because the project must be voted on at each level of the church structure; the plan is too complicated; the "pastors program syndrome."

# Kinds of Resistance

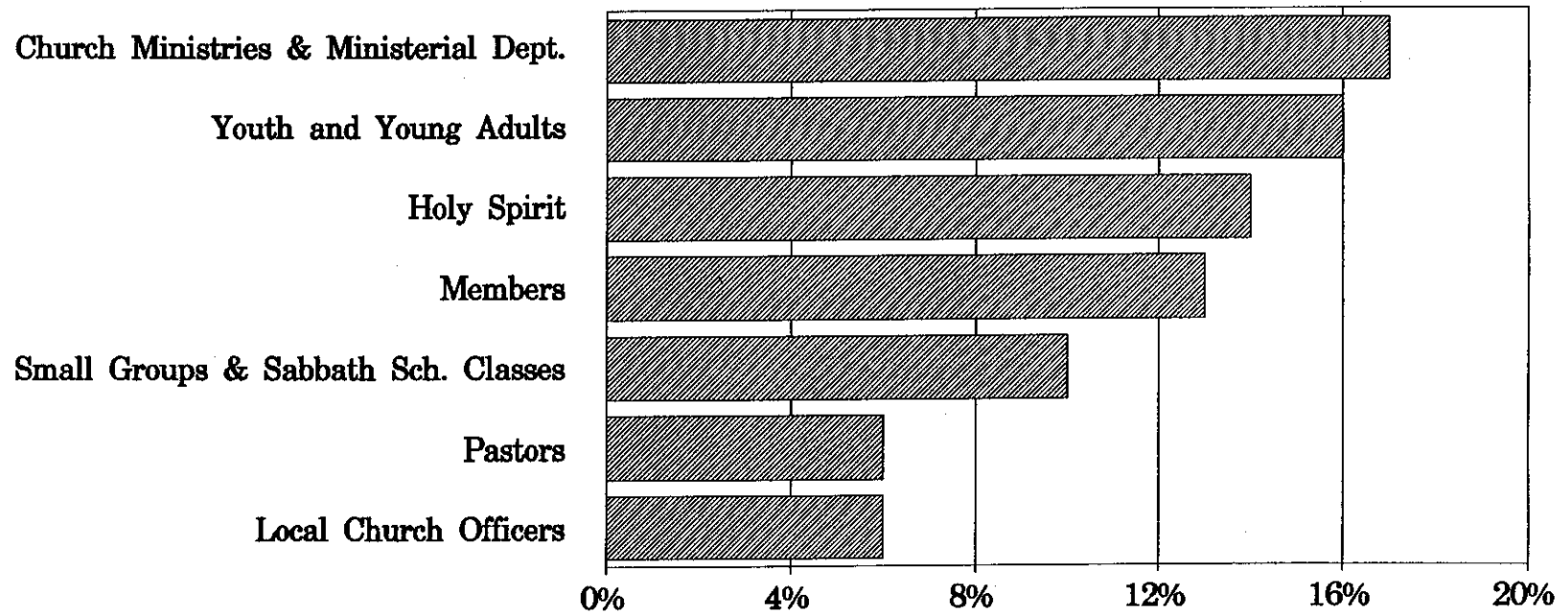


**What supportive forces are available to help?**

1. The Church Ministries Department and the Ministerial Association; conference and union workers; administrators; NAD materials; and availability to support local efforts. (17%)
2. The youth and young adults; youth groups. (16%)
3. The Holy Spirit; faith; the God-given mission of the church. (14%)
4. Willing members with a desire to see the work finished; the 10% to 20% who work. (13%)
5. The small groups and Sabbath School classes in the local church. (10%)
6. A network of informed, effective pastors. (6%)
7. The local elders, church boards and officers. (6%)

Items mentioned by one or two persons: The support of "the silent majority" of members; the conference presidents; the conference treasurers' strategy to help fund the project; the community involvement elements in the strategy; church members in prominent community positions.

# Supportive Forces



**What concrete actions should we recommend to overcome resistances?**

1. Involve church members in the planning process; prayerful discussion of the project; get them involved in creating ideas and sharing their input with the NAD. (29%)

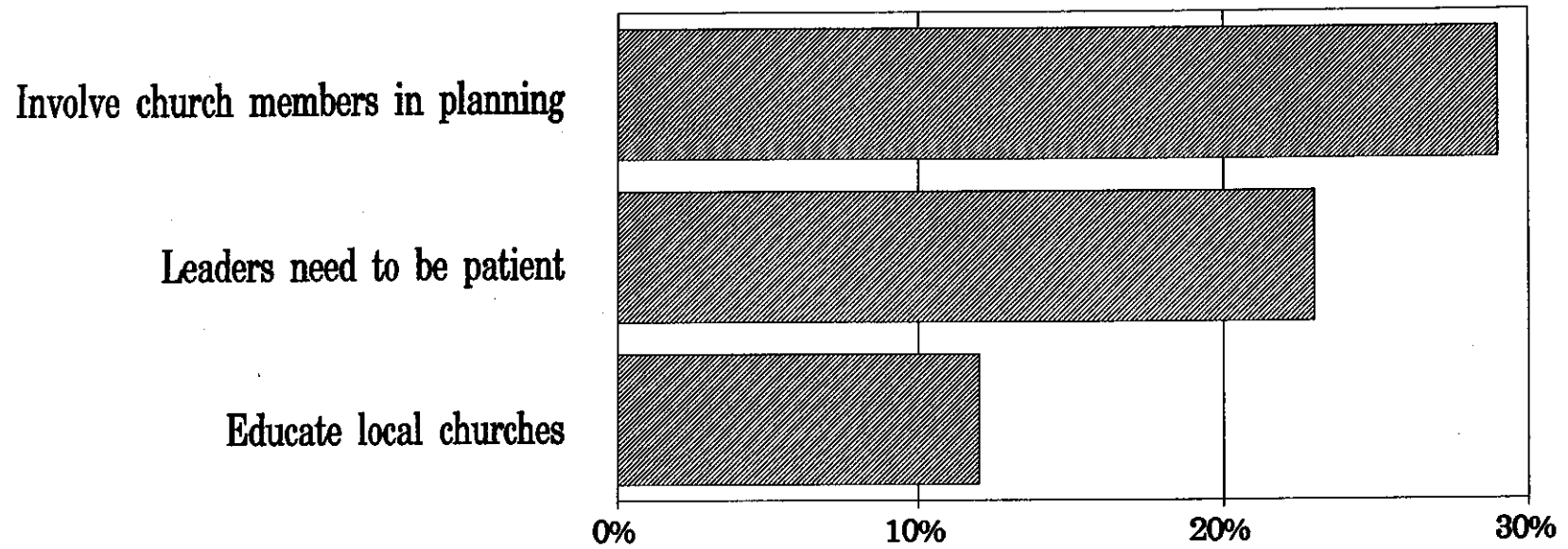
2. Denominational leaders need to be patient and accept the lack of real interest in the gospel commission. It will take time for change in attitudes. (23%)

3. Educate local churches concerning availability of financial and personnel support from the denomination. (12%)

Items mentioned by only one person: Unifying our conferences through union involvement; seeking support of the pastors at pastoral meetings; build participation through prayer network membership, membership cards, special benefits; be more open in communicating the plan; no hidden agendas; define which independent ministries are with the church and which are against it; find out why resistance exists.



# To Overcome Resistance



**What concrete actions could we take to utilize supportive forces?**

1. Encourage ownership by the people; send data from today's presentation to each church and empower them to brainstorm and submit ideas to NAD; conduct town hall meetings; get church members involved in study and discussion; conduct a think tank with laity. (30%)

2. Involve as many church members as possible in actual ministry assignments; encourage the development of local implementation plans at each church; ask each local church department to set goals; put the strategy into manageable, accomplishable tasks; set specific goals; develop local strategies to enhance plan. (23%)

3. Give support to those churches, pastors and laity who do get involved; identify supporters and give them support right away; reward churches that are successful; work with the willing ones, do not waste time with the uncooperative ones. (17%)

4. Ask each local church to have a church meeting to discuss this strategy; share the strategy with the church board and then with the whole congregation. (15%)

5. Organize small group ministries in local churches. (6%)

Items mentioned by one or two persons: Love the members more; do not overpower people with massive, loosely defined tasks; recognize upward mobility as an important trend in our churches.

# To Utilize Supportive Forces

